

Hygieia's handmaids : women, health, and healing catalogue of an exhibition held at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine 19 September to 16 December 1988 / Lesley Hall.

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**HYGIEIA'S
HANDMAIDS**

**WOMEN, HEALTH,
AND
HEALING**

WELLCOME COLL.

/(49)

AN EXHIBITION

at

the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine



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HYGIEIA'S HANDMAIDS



James Walker after James Northcote. **The Village Doctress.** Case 7.1.

HYGIEIA'S HANDMAIDS

Women, Health, and Healing

Catalogue of an exhibition
held at
The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
19 September to 16 December 1988

Lesley Hall

London
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
1988

PUBLISHERS NOTE

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for the History
and Understanding
of Medicine

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/ (49)

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Lesley Hall

Contemporary Medical Archives Centre
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine

INTRODUCTION

Women are often unseen in the traditional historical record, and find little place in histories of medicine which concentrate on its professional and orthodox aspects. Besides attendant nurses and a few semi-mythical figures like Trotula, one might see, indistinctly, among the shadows, the 'old woman in Shropshire' whose family receipt for the treatment of dropsy led William Withering to the discovery of digitalis, or Sarah Nelmes, the milkmaid whose hand Edward Jenner used to confirm his hypothesis as to the prophylactic effect of cowpox against smallpox. Women's role seems to consist chiefly of being the grateful — or victimised — patient.

Turning the glare of the limelight away from the heroic surgeon or pioneering physician to other aspects of caring for the sick and the preservation of health, we can see that women have always been present, and not merely in the background as anonymous handmaids and passive objects of male therapeutic endeavours (or else as malign witches). There have always been areas consecrated to women, in which, however despised by the medical colleges, they have played a vital part. Moreover, wherever healing skills have been acquired through family heritage or traditional learning, women have had almost equal chances of attainment.

Boundaries blur. The woman who one day is the parturient mother surrounded by gossips and midwife may on another support a neighbour through her confinement - or become through experience a trusted midwife. The wisdom gained through raising her own children and tending her family's health might lead to a role in the immediate community as a folk healer, or even to the sale of her remedies as a widely-distributed patent medicine. Informal medical aid to neighbours (an integral part of community life) became formal and organised philanthropy as society itself became more complex. The role of woman as carer, implicitly accepted, could lead to a far wider range of activity. During the nineteenth century women argued that their work of caring required entry into public activity and professional qualifications, realms hitherto denied them.

Above all, the figure of woman as patient and woman as healer merge into one another. Was it her own terrible disfigurement from smallpox, — the same disease that had killed her brother — which led Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to be particularly receptive to the idea of inoculation?

An invalid's life exempted Florence Nightingale from the tedious social obligations of her position, and enabled her to concentrate on nursing and sanitary reform. Melanie Klein sought psychoanalysis for her own severe depression; as a result she became an influential analyst. On a darker note, Marie Curie's epoch-making work on radiation caused the development of the pernicious anaemia from which she died. Other women, finding no relief for their ills at the hands of the conventional medical profession, sought alternatives or developed critiques for its reform.

The relationship of women to medicine has often been viewed from two distinct and contrasting viewpoints: either, as the entry of women into the male-defined profession of medicine (first as increasingly professionalised nurses — handmaids to male doctors — and later as doctors themselves); or, as victims of male-dominated medical practice. The present exhibition depicts a more autonomous relationship of women to health care, less associated with formal medical structures.

These kaleidoscopic aspects of women, health, and healing suggest that women are by no means simply passive consumers/victims of medical services. The female contribution to medicine and health cannot be seen solely in terms of professional recognition within the established medical framework. This exhibition reflects the constant yet diverse presence of women in health care.

Panels

Centre Panel:

1. **Hygieia.** Photograph of copy of statue in the Musée du Louvre, Paris. Hygieia: Greek goddess of health, the female aspect of Aesculapius. Her province is usually defined as the maintenance of health and prevention of disease — whence the derivation of the word 'hygiene' — as opposed to Aesculapian intervention to cure the sick.

Left hand panel:

2. **Sainte Elisabeth, Reine de Hongrie, guérissant les teigneux.** Etching by E Saint Raymond, 19th cent., after a painting by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo [1618–1682], painted for the Hospital de la Caridad, Seville.

3. **Visit to the Sick.** Aquatint by Frederick Christian Lewis [1779–1856] after John Flaxman [1755–1826], published by Mary Ann Flaxman and Maria Denman, London, 1 January 1831.

One of a series of designs by John Flaxman of 'The Seven Works of Mercy'.

Right hand panel:

4. **Trotula, Queen of midwives, holding up an orb.** Photograph of drawing. Western Ms 544. (see Case 12.3).

5. **A M Copping of the Lister Institute engaged in research on vitamins at Roebuck House.** 1939. Copy photograph.

Case 1

CHILDBIRTH

Throughout history women have given not only moral support but their own skills and experience to assist other women through parturition.

1. **Birth of the Virgin.** Coloured reproduction of predella of polyptych of San Pancrazio, by Bernardo Daddi [c. 1290–1349/51] in the Uffizi, Florence. 43 x 32 cm (actual size). Painted probably c.1340.
2. **Birth of the Virgin.** Engraving by Cornelis Cort [1533–78], after a drawing by Federico Zuccaro. 1578.
3. **Nativitas B. Mariae Virginis.** Engraving on vellum, coloured by hand in gouache and gold, by P. Bouttats [fl. 17th century]. Flemish.
4. **A kraamkamer (birth-room) with a maid giving sweetmeats to the 'gossips'.** Watercolour heightened with gold on vellum. Dutch. Mid-seventeenth century.
5. **Birth scene.** Lacquer on papier-maché forming lid of mirror case. Persian. Eighteenth century.
6. **The child born in the year of the horse.** Colour woodcut by Utagawa Shunshō. Edo, year of the horse [1846].

Although these scenes seem superficially very diverse, there are some remarkable similarities between them: the baby being bathed, the mother being given some restorative, blankets being warmed, as well as the presence of 'gossips' besides the midwife.

Obstetric girdles.

- 7-8. Two versions of the **Life of St Margaret** written on scrolls, for use as birth girdles. French. [c.1465 and c.1485.] Wellcome Western Mss. 804, 804a.
9. **Scroll of Invocations to SS Quiricus and Julitta for safe delivery.** Latin and English. [c.1500.] Wellcome Western Ms. 632.

While birth is a 'natural' event, it is one during which many things can go wrong, possibly resulting in death or damage to mother and child. In many societies girdle-charms are used to invoke supernatural protection during pregnancy and labour and to ensure a safe delivery. Christian cultures often appeal to the protection of particular saints, for example St Margaret, Virgin Martyr, patroness of women in labour, or SS Quiricus and Julitta, mother and child martyrs. The worn condition of these scrolls suggests that they were indeed used for this purpose.

10. **Parturition chair.** Seventeenth century. English.

11. **Eucharius Roesslin, the Elder [d.1526]. The byrth of mankynd, otherwyse named the womans boke. Newly set forth ...** By Thomas Raynald. [Based on translation by Richard Jonas]. London. T Raynald. 1552.

12. **Jacobus Rueff [1500-58]. The expert midwife, or an excellent and most necessary treatise of the generation and birth of man...now translated into English.** London. E Griffin for S Burton and sold by T Alchorn. 1637.

These works, compiled by male authors, assume that the conduct of childbirth is very much a matter for women.

13. **Martha Mears. The midwife's candid advice to the fair sex; or the pupil of nature.** New Edition. London. Crosby & Co. [c.1805.] First published 1797.

Although by the end of the eighteenth century the profession of man-midwife had become established and medical interest in childbirth was becoming more common, Mears still remained within the tradition that regarded childbirth as an exclusively female precinct.

14. **Wendy Savage. A Savage Enquiry.** London. Virago Press. 1986.

Most women now give birth in the sometimes frightening and impersonal ambience of hospital. Wendy Savage endeavoured to treat childbirth as a natural, not pathological, event, with the parturient woman herself as the person with the most right to make decisions on the conduct of her labour. Though she aroused much hostility among her colleagues, Mrs Savage's restoration of the mother to the centre of the child-bearing process earned her enormous support among the local community she served.

Case 2

MIDWIFERY

The female involvement in childbirth has led to the development of midwifery as an increasingly formalised profession subject to legal restrictions.

1. **Le baptême administré par la sage femme.** Engraving with etching by Bernard Picart [1673-1733].

When the new-born child seemed likely to die before the arrival of a priest, midwives were permitted to baptise rather than risk endangering the child's soul by letting it expire unbaptised.

2. **Midwives' licenses.** Collection of certificates on behalf of provincial midwives. 1687-1728. Western Ms. 3544.

Midwives in England were licensed to practice by the bishop of the diocese. While these licences allude to the women's skill and experience it is likely that good character and church-going were regarded as more important qualifications.

3. **Jane Sharp. The midwives book. Or the whole art of midwifery discovered.** Directing childbearing women how to behave themselves. London. S Miller. 1671.

4. **Elizabeth Nihell. A treatise on the art of midwifery.** Setting forth various abuses therein. London. A Morley. 1760.

With the development of obstetrical forceps, first employed by the Chamberlen family, it became possible to intervene in difficult labour and to save mothers and babies in cases which would formerly have been hopeless. The dissemination of this new instrumental intervention in childbirth was in the hands of medical men rather than midwives, and it gave rise to continuing protest. Meanwhile midwives themselves made a distinction between those experienced and well-qualified to attend labour, and 'ignorant' midwives.

5. **A midwife going to a labour.** Handcoloured etching by Thomas Rowlandson [1756-1827] published by Thomas Tegg. London. 12 February 1811. Tegg's Caricatures No.55.

The old-fashioned 'handywoman' type of midwife: note the bottle she carries to sustain herself through the hours of labour. However, she has turned out in the middle of the night to attend her client.



Rowlandson. Del.

A MIDWIFE GOING TO A LABOUR.

Printed by J. W. G. Chapman, 181, Fleet Street, London.

Thomas Rowlandson. A midwife going to a labour. Case 2.5.

6. Marie Anne Victoire Boivin (née Gillain) [1776-1841]. Illustrations and notes for her *Atlas des maladies de l'utérus*. Western Ms. 1289.

Mme Boivin's work at the Hospice de la Maternité in Paris, allied as it was to theoretical learning, gave her a knowledge of the problems of women probably unrivalled by that of any of her male contemporaries. She was fully aware of contemporary medical developments and was one of the first to employ the stethoscope to listen to the foetal heartbeat. Her skills and expertise were recognised by the award to her of an honorary degree by the University of Marburg although her native France did not accord her any equivalent recognition.

7. Florence Nightingale [1820-1910]. Introductory notes on lying-in institutions. Appendix on 'Midwifery as a career for educated women'. London. Longmans, Green. 1871.

Nightingale here argues that women would be better employed in training to become physician-accoucheuses than in endeavouring to qualify as 'lady doctors', thus redeeming the profession of midwife from its stigma of ignorance. She specifically contrasts the situation in England with the high repute in which continental midwives like Mme Boivin were held.

8. Central Midwives Board examination paper, 1912.

9. Certificate awarded to Elizabeth Batten [1884-1984].

In 1902 the Midwives Act was passed by the British Parliament, instituting a Register of Midwives. While initially it was possible to become a registered midwife on the basis of experience the Act was aimed at producing a cadre of medically trained professional midwives instead of 'handywomen'.

10. Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Lady Coryndon Maternity Training School, Uganda. Booklet and newspaper account.

11. Certified Midwife badge. Protectorate of Uganda.

The training of midwives was seen as a vital step in combatting the very high level of infant mortality in Uganda in the 1920s. Training midwives in elementary hygiene was often a cheap but beneficial public health measure in countries where cultural taboos prevented the employment of male medical assistance.

12. National Birthday Trust Fund Safer Motherhood Campaign.

When the NBTF was founded in 1929 with the aim of reducing perinatal mortality and improving maternal health, it set out to do so by improving midwifery training and services.

13. Nursing and Midwifery. Career leaflets.

Only a professionally qualified midwife may now legally use the title.

14. Association of Radical Midwives.

An association of women who deplore the decline in the status of midwife as the result of wider changes in medical practice, and whose aim is to reinstate her as a skilled professional in the conduct of labour.

15. Midwife's bag. Black cowhide. British. 1901-1930.



William Strang. Mother feeding baby. Case 3.2.

Case 3

BABY CARE

The mother's care and vigilance from birth onwards is essential to the preservation of the health of her children. The small helpless human baby needs much care if it is to arrive at maturity. As D W Winnicott wrote: 'Without maternal care, there would be no infant.'

1. **Mother feeding baby.** Etching and drypoint on vellum by Joseph Israels [1824-1911].
2. **Mother bathing baby.** Reproduction of woodcut by William Strang [1859-1921], 1904.
3. **Domestic scene of changing baby, drying its nappies, combing for nits.** Engraving and etching by Francesco Bartolozzi [c.1725-1815] after Giuseppe Zocchi [1711-1767] published by Wagner, Venice.

These 'natural' operations are nonetheless essential contributions to child health.

4. **Observations upon the proper nursing of children from a long series of experience.** London. R & J Dodsley. 1761.

Child health through proper dress (as sold at Mrs Hallum's infant clothing warehouse).

5. **The mother's guide, or plain observations on the management of children, during the first month.** 2nd ed. Bristol. Wright & Bagnall. 1828. This work claims that lifelong health is founded on the wise conduct of a child's mother during the first month of its life.

6. **Margaret Jane Moore, Countess Mountcashell [1773-1835]. Advice to young mothers on the physical education of children. By a grandmother.** Florence. J Molini. 1835.

Lady Mountcashell appeals to her grandmotherly experience as her authority to instruct others on child rearing.

7. **L'Huile de Ricin.** Photo-mechanical reproduction by Protat frères, Mâcon, after a photograph by Braun, Clement et Cie, of a painting by Jean Geoffroy [1853-1924], exhibited at the Salon in 1894. Distributed by A Gonnon, Lyon, 1905, as an advertisement.

Geoffroy was official illustrator to Dr Gaston Variot [1855-1930], puericulturist and founder of the 'Goutte de Lait' clinics in 1894. The exhibited picture is typical of his studies of the relationship between the sick child and the mother or nurse.

8. **Kepler Malt Extract Display.**

It is the mother, these advertisements imply, who doses the child with castor-oil or malt extract.

9. **Milton Milgard.** A new and better way to cleanse and then help protect a baby's delicate skin between nappy changes. Richardson-Merrell Ltd. Slough.

10. **Farley's.** Glaxo-Farley Foods. Plymouth.

11. **From Milk to Mixed Diet.** H J Heinz Company Ltd. Hayes.

The promotional leaflets and the rusk packet appeal to a mother's desire to do the best to preserve and promote her child's health.

12. **Infant feeding bottle.** Copeland and Garrett. 1833-47.

Glazed pottery, late Spode.

13. **Infant feeding bottle.** S Maw, Son and Sons Ltd. 1955-70.

Glass (Pyrex).

14. **Sheila Kitzinger.** The experience of breastfeeding. Harmondsworth. Penguin Books. 1979.

Breast-feeding is not so natural an activity that manuals of guidance are not needed.

15. **Sylvia Hull.** Cooking for a baby. Harmondsworth. Penguin Books. 1979. The author of this book lays emphasis on the health benefits of home preparation of food for children.

16. **The first twelve months.** Excerpts from the National Birthday Trust Fund Calendar. Nursing World. 8 December 1967.

Each month shows one of the natural stages of a baby's development.



After Joseph Clark. The sick child. Case 4.1.

Cases 4 and 5

CARING IN THE HOME AND DOMESTIC MEDICINE

Within the home the mother has prime charge of sick family members and is responsible for household hygiene. Women are expected to act as carers. Traditional household skills of cooking, brewing and distilling were closely connected with the processes of preparing remedies for a wide range of ailments: physicking the family was just another aspect of female expertise, receipts being handed down from mother to daughter. With the rise in literacy, works on domestic medicine, often based on existing family compilations, were published for a wider audience. The relationship between medical care and housewifely skills is clear in works which include culinary recipes, recommendations for cleaning, instructions on the preparation of cordials, and medical receipts.

Case 4

1. **The sick child.** Lithograph after a painting by Joseph Clark [1834-1926], c.1875-6.
2. **Das Hausmittel.** Coloured lithograph by H Waldow Jnr. Published in Berlin. [c. 1860?].
A home remedy.
3. **The cut foot.** Coloured lithograph. Anon.
4. **Tak tent Jenny.** Etching by Walter Geikie [1795-1837].
5. **The cut finger.** Engraving by Ferdinand Sébastien Goulu [1796-1843] after Sir David Wilkie [1785-1841], published by Abraham Raimbach, London.
6. **Famiglia dei Pedochiosi.** Etching by Bartolomeo Pinelli [1781-1835] after his own design.
The title translates as 'The louse ridden family'.
7. **Washing place at Torre del Greco.** Coloured line and stipple engraving and etching by James Godby after P. van Lerberg(h)i. Plate 8 from *Italian Scenery*, London. Edward Orme. 1806.

Women are here depicted attending to the injuries and ailments of their families and engaged in measures of elementary hygiene.

8. Mrs Mary Miller. **Her Booke of Receipts.** 1660. Western Ms. 3547.

9. Madame Bridget Hyde. **Receipt book.** August the 19th Anno Domini 1676. Western Ms. 2990.

10. Lady Ayscough. **Receipts of physick and chirurgery.** 1692. Western Ms. 1026.

Manuscripts such as these were kept and added to over generations. Receipts for remedies were exchanged between individuals and preserved as part of family tradition.

11. Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent [1581-1651]. **A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgery.** London. G Dawson for W Shears. 1653.

A family recipe book given wider circulation.

Hannah Wolley.

12. **The accomplish'd lady's delight in preserving, physick, beautifying and cookery.** London. B Harris. 1675.

The title-page shows women in the still room, and displaying domestic skills.

13. **The queen-like closet: or a rich cabinet stored with all manner of rare receipts for preserving, candying and cookery.** London. R Chiswell & T Sawbridge. 1684.

Hannah Woolley or Wolley learnt physic and surgery from her mother and sisters, practised medicine successfully and produced these handbooks of domestic lore.

Case 5

1. **The ladies dispensatory: or every woman her own physician.** London. J. Hodges and J. James. [1739].

2. **The ladies companion; or, the housekeeper's guide.** London. [1756].

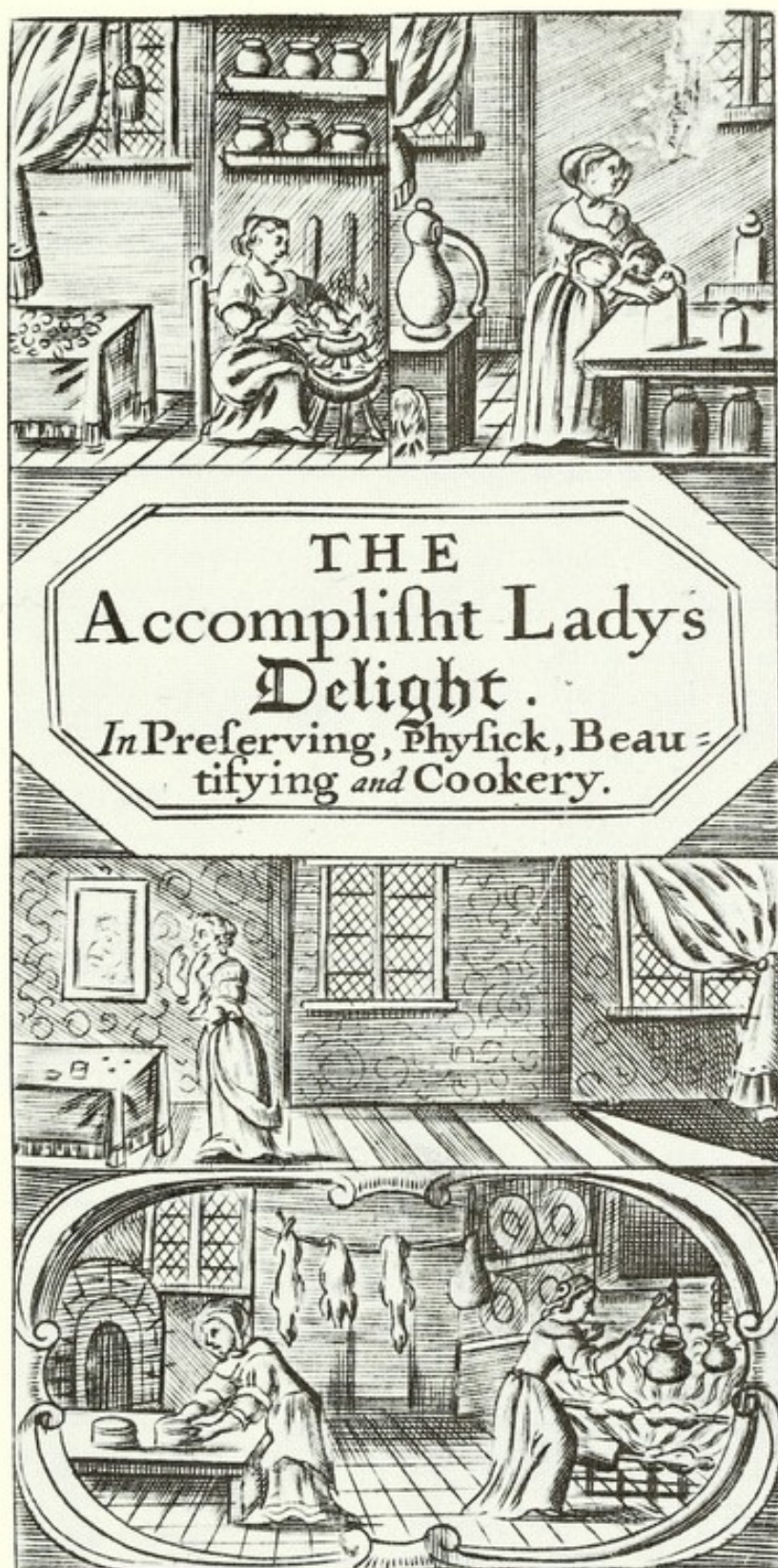
3. **The female instructor; or young woman's companion.** Liverpool. Nuttall, Fisher & Dixon. [1812].

4. Annabella Plumptre. **Domestic management; or, the healthful cookery-book.** London. B & R Crosby. 1812.

Diet as the foundation of health.

5. Isabella Mary Beeton [1836-1865]. **The book of household management.** London. Chancellor Press. 1982(repr.1985). First published in 1861.

These works, compiled and published over two centuries, show the continuing tradition of women's concern for domestic health.



THE
Accomplisht Lady's
Delight.
*In Preserving, Physick, Beau-
tifying and Cookery.*

Hannah Wolley. The accomplish'd lady's delight in preserving, physick, beautifying and cookery. Case 4.12.

6. Florence Nightingale [1820-1910]. **Notes on nursing: what it is, and what it is not.** London. Harrison. [1860].

These notes, by the famous reformer of professional nursing, are addressed to 'women who have personal charge of the health of others'. According to her, 'every woman must, at some time in her life, become a nurse'. The book deals with the care of the sick within their own homes, and is a manual of domestic advice on the subject rather than a work for the professional hospital nurse.

7. **Second childishness.** Engraving by William Bromley after Thomas Stothard, RA, published by William Bromley, Hammersmith, 24 January 1799.

The responsibility for the old is still likely to devolve on female rather than male family members.

8. **'Tabloid' First Aid for the Mother Out Back.** Designed by the Wellcome Foundation Limited. 1924.

Women living in remote parts of the world out of easy reach of medical help were obliged, even in the twentieth century, to deal with a wide range of injuries and diseases.

9. Gladys Mary Cox, MB, BS. **The woman's book of health: a complete guide to physical well-being.** London. The Lady's Companion. [1933].

10. Sir William Arbuthnot Lane [1856-1943], et al. **The modern woman's home doctor.** London. Odham's Press. [1939].

A woman must look after her own health, so that she may better care for her family in sickness and health.

11. **The 'Home' first aid case,** prepared by Boots Pure Drug Co. Ltd., Nottingham. 1939-41.

A wooden case with brass clasp and hinges; the contents include bandages, dressings, lint and tins of potassium permanganate tablets.

12. **Advertisements.** Calpol, Savlon, Uvistat. 1988.

Mother's vigilance over her family's well-being never ceases, even if she no longer makes up potions and unguents herself.

Case 6

PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITY

The caring role of women extended beyond the family circle into philanthropy and charitable care for the less fortunate. This could be direct, as in the provision of medical care for the poor or visiting the sick; or indirect, as in taking part in money-raising activities.

1. **St Elizabeth of Hungary visiting the sick.** Pen and ink drawing by Jan Luyken [1649–1712]. c.1690.

2. **St Elizabeth giving alms to a leper.** Etching, coloured in gouache, by Wenzel Langhammer, Hohenelbe, Bohemia (Vrchlabí, Czechoslovakia). Eighteenth century.

Visiting the sick and giving alms is one of the seven corporeal works of mercy: St Elizabeth [1207–1231], daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary and wife of Louis, Landgrave of Thuringia, is often used as an exemplar of these virtues, in recognition of her care of lepers, paupers, and sick people in the hospitals she founded at the Wartburg castle, near Eisenach, and at Marburg.

3. **Mary Herbert (née Sidney), Countess of Pembroke** [1561–1621]. Anon. stipple engraving. Proof before letters.

Few women other than royalty have been in the position of Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, who, besides being a patron of the arts and sciences, founded two hospitals.

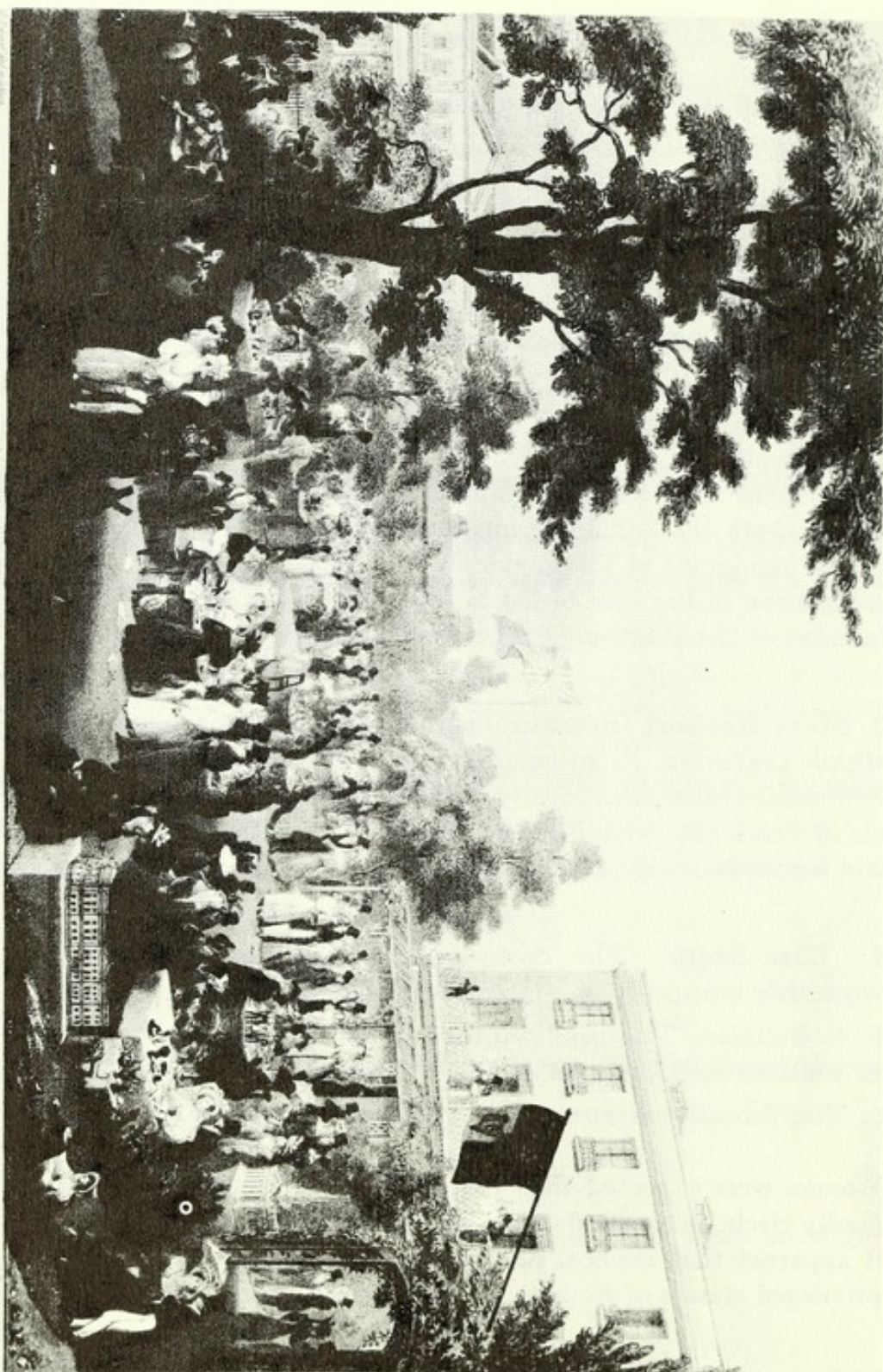
4. **Eliza Smith. The compleat housewife; or, accomplish'd gentlewoman's companion.** 4th ed. London. J Pemberton. 1730.

5. **E. Bullman. The medical directory; or, family physician.** [Faversham.] E. Bullman & D.T. Dulmar. 1810.

6. **The female instructor; or young woman's companion.** (See Case 5.3.)

Women were expected to deploy their skills in domestic medicine beyond the family circle, in particular for the benefit of the poor. These three works make it apparent that medical philanthropy was an accepted part of the role of the privileged classes of women.

7. **Catharine Cappe** [1743?–1821]. **Thoughts on the desirableness and utility of ladies visiting the female wards of hospitals and lunatic asylums.** London. 1816.



George Scharf. A Fancy Fair, held 1830 for the benefit of Charing Cross Hospital. Case 6.10.

The writer of this pamphlet suggests that the benefits of women visiting the afflicted of their own sex would not only include giving comfort, but would also provide a check on maladministration in the institutions where they were incarcerated. Compare the remarks in Burdett's Directory, 1902, about the Royal Hospital for Incurables.

8. Sir Henry Charles Burdett [1847-1920]. *Hospitals and charities 1902 being the year book of philanthropy and the hospital manual*. pp. 88-89.

9. 'Medical Annotations.' *Lancet*, 29 August 1857.

On women and local charitable organisations. The emphasis is laid on the proper sphere of work for women — unpaid, philanthropic and humble.

10. A Fancy Fair, held May 1830 for the benefit of Charing Cross Hospital. Lithograph by George Scharf [1788-1860]. 1830.

11. Fête at Grosvenor House in aid of the funds of the Hospital for Women, Soho Square. Anon. Wood-engraving for the *Illustrated London News*. c. 1855.

12. Hospital Saturday: a lady collector in the city. Anon. Wood-engraving for the *Illustrated London News*.

13. Letter from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson to Maude Schäfer about the University College Hospital Bazaar.

14. Fund raising activities of the National Birthday Trust Fund.

During the Victorian era many women became involved in the less direct philanthropic activity of raising money for charitable purposes. The extent to which this was an obligation upon the Victorian middle-class woman can be deduced from the letter written by Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first woman to qualify in medicine in Britain, to Maude, the wife of Professor E A Schäfer of University College London, about a bazaar in support of University College Hospital. Her profession did not exempt her from this obligation. Fund-raising is to this day by no means an obsolete activity.

Cases 7 and 8

FOLK AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

The traditional healing role of some women has always been recognised, although sometimes it is negatively depicted as the subversive power of the witch or amateur interference within the realm of the doctor. Women have, partly because of their exclusion from orthodox medical hierarchies, been especially involved in traditional and alternative therapies.

Case 7

1. **The Village Doctress.** Coloured mezzotint by James Walker after painting by James Northcote [1746-1831].

The cat at the feet of the benign folk-healer may allude to the traditional connection between women healers and witchcraft.

2. James Primrose [d.1659]. **Popular errorrs. Or the errorrs of the people in physick.** London. W Wilson for N Bourne. 1651.

In this book, first published in Latin in 1639, an old woman and her medicine are depicted as interfering with a doctor's treatment.

3. **Mucho hay que chupar.** Aquatint with etching by Francisco José Goya y Lucientes [1746-1828].

One of a series of aquatints entitled **Los Caprichos** [1796-98].

4. **Les Sorcières.** Anon. Lithograph after François Auguste Biard [c.1799-1882]. From **Revue des Peintres.** c.1820.

5. **Old woman sitting at table with bottles on it.** Etching by Wilhelm Unger. Late 19th century.

6. **The expert midwife.** (See Case 1.10.)

On witches and harlots who procure abortions.

A trait common to many cultures equates the power to heal with the power to harm. It was feared that the skills of a midwife might be employed in the prevention of births as well as with their safe conclusion. A woman who had power could have acquired it through trafficking with the forces of darkness.

7. Mary Trye. **Medicatrix or the woman-physician: vindicating Thomas O'Dowde, a chymical physician.** London. T R & N T for H Broome. 1675.

8. Anthony Daffy. **Daffy's original and famous Elixir Salutis.** London. T Milbourn for the author. 1693.

In some cases women carried on a family business or tradition. The work by Mary Trye was written defending the 'Chymical Physicke' system of her father Thomas O'Dowde, from whom she claimed to have learnt medicine. The advertisement for Daffy's Elixir states that the only genuine Elixir was for sale by Daffy's widow.

9. **Mrs Mapp the bonesetter.** Coloured etching by George Cruikshank [1792-1878] after William Hogarth [1697-1764]. Plate from *Caulfield's Portraits of Remarkable Persons*. 1819-20.

10. Account of Mrs Mapp's career and cures. *Gentleman's Magazine*. October 1736. p.617.

Sarah Mapp, née Wallen, [d.1737], the bonesetter, had learnt the skill from her father. Her standing was such that the town of Epsom offered her £100 a year to reside there, and she made weekly visits to London. In spite of the success she enjoyed, she died in poverty. She had the dubious distinction of inclusion, with members of the orthodox medical profession of the era, in Hogarth's group caricature 'The Company of Undertakers'. The portrait displayed is taken from this, and it is the only existing depiction of 'Mad Sally', as she was sometimes called.

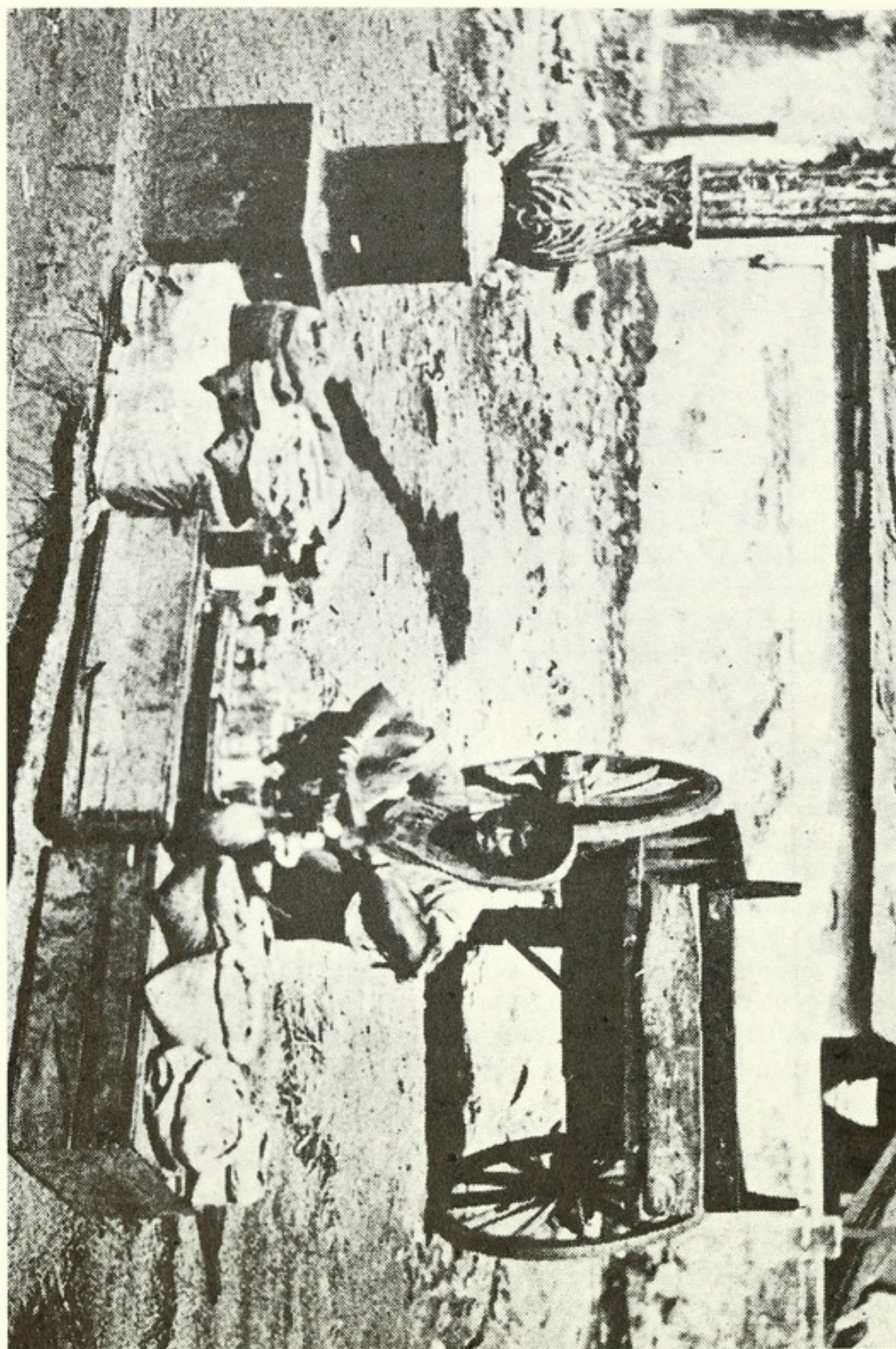
11. David Hartley [1705-1757]. *A view of the present evidence for and against Mrs Stephens's medicines as a solvent for the stone.* London. S Harding.

12. Stephen Hales [1677-1761]. *An account of some experiments and observations on Mrs Stephens's medicines for dissolving the stone.* London. T Woodward. [1740.]

13. Richard Gem [1716?-69]. *An account of the remedy for the stone.* London. H Woodfall for J Roberts. 1741.

14. David D'Escherny [b.c. 1730]. *A treatise of the causes and symptoms of the stone.* London. J Haberkorn for J Griffiths. 1755.

Joanna Stephens [d.1774] received £5,000 from Parliament in 1739 for her remedy for the stone on the recommendation of a Commission which included many noted physicians and surgeons of the day. The question of the efficacy of the remedy aroused a good deal of controversy. These pamphlets embody some of the opinions that were expressed. One of them alludes to Joanna Stephens' medical practice among the poor.



Traditional Indian woman doctor at roadside. Case 8.1.

Case 8

1. Traditional Indian woman doctor at roadside. Photograph.

An example of traditional folk medicine in another country.

2. Clemence Sophia Harned Lozier [1813-1888]. Stipple engraving by H B Hall, Jnr. New York. n.d.

Homoeopathic physician and founder of the New York Homoeopathic College and Hospital for Women.

3. Mary Sergeant Gove Nichols [1818-1884]. Experience in water-cure: a familiar exposition of the principles and results of water treatment, in the cure of acute and chronic diseases. New York. Fowlers and Wells. [1850.]

During the nineteenth century a number of alternative therapies were developed or gained fresh support in the USA. Looser controls on the profession in the USA enabled women to qualify as doctors within alternative systems. C S H Lozier, depicted here, was a homoeopathic doctor. The water-cure ('hydropathic') movement, however, was opposed to doctors and laid far more emphasis upon what the individual could do in preservation of their own health. Mary G Nichols began her career as a proponent of the water cure by treating her neighbours. Subsequently she became a public advocate of hydrotherapy and established several hydropathic institutions.

4. Edited by Ziggi Alexander and Audrey Dewjee. Wonderful adventures of Mrs Seacole in many lands. 2nd ed. Bristol. Falling Wall Press. 1984. First published 1857, James Blackwood.

Mary Seacole [1805-1881] travelled to the Crimea at her own expense to take care of the victims of the Crimea campaign. She was far more than a simple nurse: she had learnt traditional remedies from her mother, a Creole doctress in a long family tradition in Jamaica, and had tended the victims of a cholera epidemic in Central America.

5. Julius Silberger, Jnr. Mary Baker Eddy, an interpretive biography of the founder of Christian Science. Boston, Mass. Little, Brown. 1980.

6. Mary Baker Eddy. Science and health with key to the Scriptures. Boston, Mass. The First Church of Christ, Scientist. 1971. First published 1875.

7. Christian Science: a century later. Boston, Mass. The Christian Science Publishing Society. 1982.

Mary Baker Eddy's attack on the medical profession led to her founding of the Church of Christ Scientist which maintains that disease is caused by mind alone, and that sin, sickness and death are all delusion. Spiritual healing is still regarded as an important part of Christian Science practice, although members hold no healing services or rituals, relying instead on the power of prayer.

8. Mother Seigel's operating pills for constipation and sluggish liver.
9. Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Women who suffer. San Francisco Chronicle, 14 November 1909.

'Mother Seigel' was probably an invention for promotional purposes, but Lydia Pinkham [1819-1883] did exist, and her famous vegetable compound was marketed as a far gentler remedy for the female system than the violent male-prescribed treatments then common. Her home remedy was at first given to neighbours in need, but it eventually became the foundation of a patent-medicine empire.

Women abortionists

10. Mrs Emmett-Jones, Cromaloids leaflet.
11. Press cuttings from Abortion Law Reform Association collection.
12. Moya Woodside. 'Illegal Abortion: the Woman Abortionist.' (1966)
13. Improved Higginson's enema apparatus with rectal and vaginal pipes, in original tin. 1935.

Used by some back street abortionists.

A dichotomy can be seen between the public image of the female abortionist presented in these press reports and their self-image and their role in the lives of their clients as revealed by Moya Woodside's investigations. Before the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act, these women were often the only resort of those unable to afford an expensive legal abortion.

Case 9

CRITICS AND REFORMERS

Turning to alternative therapies and medical systems is often a tacit criticism of existing orthodox medical practice. Women, however, have not hesitated to criticise the medical profession openly, and to advocate reforms.

Josephine Butler [1828-1906], and the Campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts.

1. Henry Mayhew [1812-1887]. **London labour and the London poor. Vol.IV. Those that will not work. Comprising, prostitutes, thieves, swindlers, beggars.** London. Griffin, Bohn & Co. 1862.

Many respectable women were engaged in philanthropic endeavours to redeem prostitutes from a life as physically perilous as it was spiritually deleterious, long before the passing of the Contagious Diseases Acts focused public opinion on the subject. These Midnight Prayer Meetings were thought to be a way of presenting prostitutes with an alternative to their sinful ways, at an hour when they were up and about their business.

2. Josephine Butler. Photograph.

3. **Electors of England!** Handbill.

4. **Report of the Royal Commission Upon the Administration and Operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1871.** Evidence of Mrs Butler.

5. **The skeleton in the cupboard.** Etching by Frederick Carter [1885-1967]. 1908.

This sinister allegory connects prostitution with syphilis and death.

The Contagious Diseases Acts, passed during the 1860s, were intended to control the spread of venereal disease in the armed forces by providing for the medical examination of prostitutes in certain designated towns, and for their compulsory detention, if identified as diseased. The implications of these Acts, and fears lest they be extended, aroused amongst women enormous opposition to legislation which they perceived as unjust, liable to dangerous abuses, and which was ineffective in the current state of medical knowledge. Josephine Butler [1828-1906] and her colleagues in the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts regarded the Acts as the product of a male-dominated profession.



Frederick Carter. The skeleton in the cupboard. Case 9.5.

Women Against Vivisection.

6. The Animal Defence League. Minutes of the Executive Council of the Society. 26 May 1911 to 17 August 1916.
7. Pamphlet by Frances Power Cobbe on the Pasteur Institute.
8. Lind-af-Hageby libel case: notes of court proceedings. 3 April 1913.
9. Old Brown Dog statue. Photograph.

The membership of the Committee of the Animal Defence League shows that this was a cause with which women were particularly involved. Frances Power Cobbe [1822-1904] was a major propagandist against vivisection: this pamphlet is one example of her prolific outpourings on the subject. E A L Lind-af-Hageby [1878-1963] (a Swedish lady resident in Britain) brought a libel suit against Dr C W Saleeby and the **Pall Mall Gazette** over an article about her Piccadilly shop-front display of the horrors of vivisection. She lost the case, but won a public chance to air her views. She was also one of the subscribers to the drinking fountain with the statue commemorating the 'Old Brown Dog', a victim of animal experimentation.

Abortion Law Reform.

10. Janet Chance.
 11. Alice Jenkins.
 12. Lady Houghton of Sowerby with Dilys Cossey.
 13. Madeleine Simms.
 14. Diane Munday.
- Copy photographs.

15. Abortion Law Reform Association. Assorted literature.
16. Badges of campaigns to preserve the 1967 Abortion Act.

Since its foundation in 1935 women have always played a prominent role in the Abortion Law Reform Association. In the early days women such as Janet Chance and Alice Jenkins took the risky step of breaking taboos in order to advocate reforms. More recently, women like Diane Munday, Vera Houghton, Madeleine Simms and Dilys Cossey saw the 1967 Abortion Bill pass into law, and defended it from attempts to restrict its provisions.

17. Our Bodies Ourselves. A health book by and for women. Boston Women's Health Book Collective. British edition by Angela Phillips and Jill Rakusen. USA edition: New York. Simon and Schuster. 1971. UK edition: Harmondsworth. Penguin Books. 1978.

A feminist critique of male-dominated medical practice.

This work is critique, self-help health manual, and alternative to the main stream of medical tradition, all in one.

Cases 10 and 11

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUTSIDE THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

Women have made valuable contributions to medical science and practice without becoming part of the established profession. While many of their names have been lost, others are preserved in the annals of history.

Case 10

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu [1689-1762].

1. **Portrait.** Lithograph by Achille Jacques Jean Marie Devéria after a miniature by Christian Zincke [1685-1767] in the possession of Charles Colville.

2. **Letters of the Rt Hon Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: written during her travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa.** [Possibly edited by John Cleland, preface by Mary Astell]. London. J Osborne & T Griffin. 1785.

In Turkey, while her husband was Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu encountered the local custom of inoculation against smallpox. She had her children inoculated and introduced the practice into Britain where it was superseded in the late eighteenth century by Jenner's discovery of vaccination.

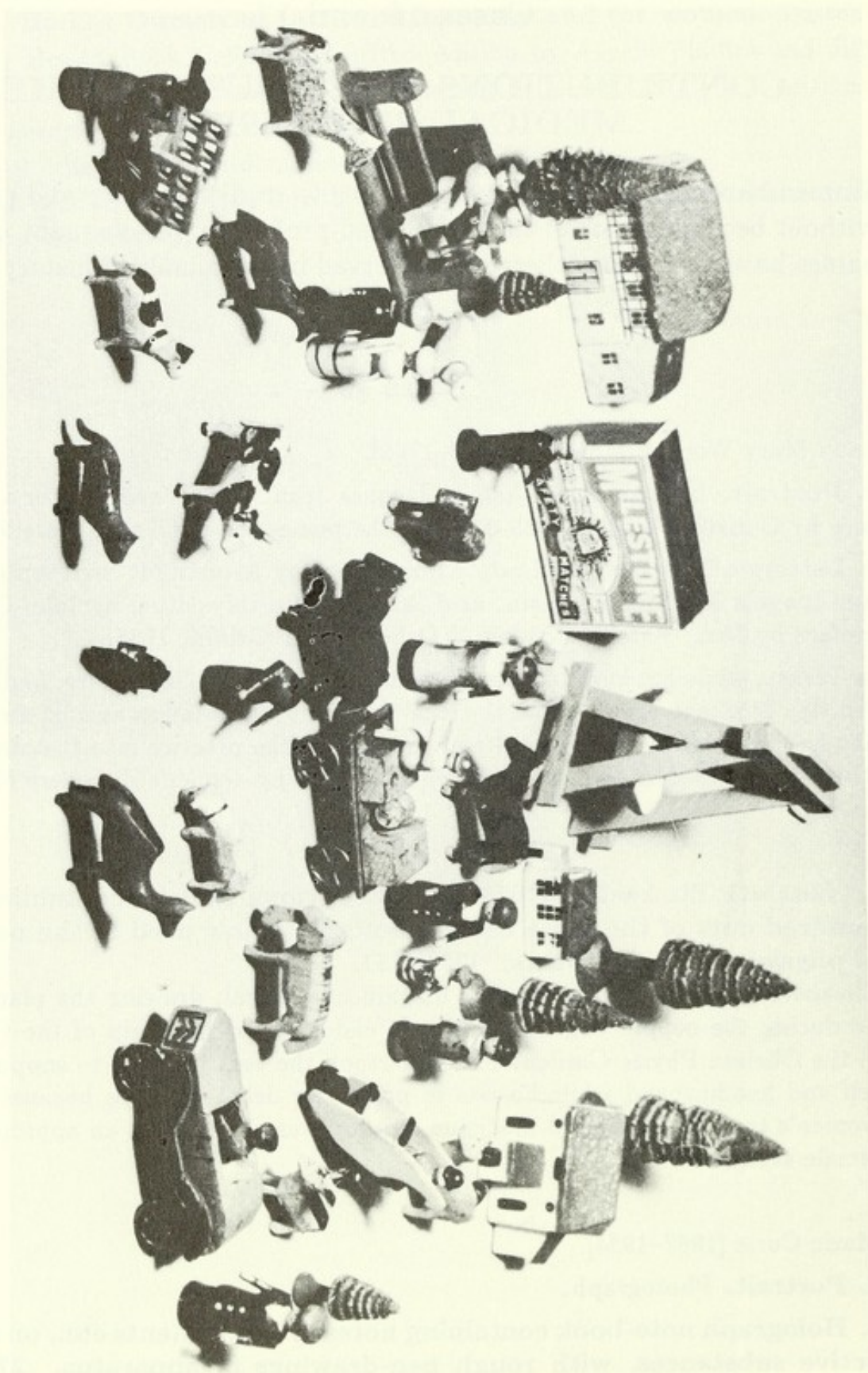
3. Elizabeth Blackwell [c.1700-1758]. **A curious herbal, containing five hundred cuts of the most useful plants . . . now used in the practice of physick.** London. J Nourse. 1739-1751.

Elizabeth Blackwell produced this magnificent herbal, drawing the plants and producing the copper engravings herself under the sponsorship of the Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden. She undertook the task in order to support herself and her husband while he was in prison for debt. Perhaps because of the women's tradition of herbal medicine, botany was also seen as an appropriately female study.

Marie Curie [1867-1934].

4. **Portrait.** Photograph.

5. **Holograph note-book containing notes of experiments etc., on radioactive substances, with rough pen-drawings of apparatus.** 27 May 1899 to 4 December 1902. Western Ms. 1978.



Melanie Klein. Toys used in play therapy. Case 11.6.

6. **Les rayons . . . des corps radioactifs en relation avec la structure nucléaire.** (Incomplete.) Holograph manuscript. Paris. 1932. Western Ms. 1979.

Marie Curie (née Sklodowska) won the Nobel Prize for Physics for her work on radium and radioactivity. She was aware of the diagnostic and therapeutic implications of her discoveries, and was responsible for determining the Radioactivity Standard. During the First World War she equipped ambulances with X-ray apparatus for military use by the French, became head of the French Radiology Service and instructed doctors in the subject. She was particularly concerned with the therapeutic uses of radiation, and with the development of safety standards for those working with radioactive materials. She died of radiation-induced disease.

'Sister' Elizabeth Kenny [1880-1952].

7. **Infantile paralysis and cerebral dysplasia. Methods used for the restoration of function.** Sydney. Angus & Robertson. 1937.

8. **And they shall walk, the life story of Sister Elizabeth Kenny written in collaboration with Martha Ostenso.** London. R Hale. 1951.

Recent biographical research suggests that Sister Kenny was not even a qualified nurse. However, she devised highly efficacious methods of rehabilitative treatment for those disabled by poliomyelitis. The introduction of a vaccine against the disease has made them no longer necessary.

Marie Charlotte Carmichael Stopes [1880-1958] and birth control.

9. **Extract from Proceedings of case against H Sutherland, 1922-1924.**

10. **Dr Marie Stopes' caravan birth control clinic.** Photograph.

11. **Contraceptive devices.** Photograph.

12. **Practical birth control: A letter to Working Mothers, on how to have healthy children and avoid weakening pregnancies.**

13. **Portrait of Marie Stopes.** Reproduction of charcoal drawing, by David Low [1892-1963], with manuscript annotation in biro 'Very unlike Marie C Stopes', in her own hand.

According to A J P Taylor, **English History 1914-45**, 'one of the great benefactors of the age', Marie Stopes, a palaeobotanist, became a birth control propagandist in the 1920s when this was still a taboo subject. She wrote on it extensively and set up a birth control clinic for poor mothers in Holloway. She also devised the idea of a travelling clinic to visit parts of the country not supplied with birth control clinics. She was accused by Dr Halliday Sutherland of experimenting on the poor; the subsequent libel suit brought both Stopes and birth control considerable publicity. Her **Letter to Working Mothers** used simple language to suggest cheap and readily-available contraceptive devices for poor women.

Case 11

Muriel Robertson, FRS [1883-1973]. Leeches and their role in trypanosomiasis.

1. **Fishing for leeches at Elstree 1910-11.** Photograph.
2. **Account by her of the work.**

Muriel Robertson studied the life cycle of trypanosomes — organisms implicated in various diseases — and she discovered the role of the leech as an intermediate host. Here she can be seen fishing for them in the ponds at Elstree. Shortly after this the Colonial Office sent her to Africa to investigate sleeping sickness, i.e. trypanosomiasis spread by the tsetse fly.

Dame Harriette Chick, DBE [1875-1977].

3. **Award of Jenner Memorial Scholarship, 1905.**
4. **Universitäts-Kinderklinik, Wien.** Photograph album.
5. **H Chick at Roebuck House during World War II.** Photograph.

When Harriette Chick's appointment as Jenner Memorial Research Fellow at the Lister Institute was mooted, there was some opposition on the grounds of her sex. She was appointed, however, and continued her connection with that Institute for the rest of her life. Initially a bacteriologist, she turned to nutritional research and worked with Margaret Hume on the treatment of the diseases of malnutrition prevalent in post World War I Vienna. She investigated vitamins in connection with rationing policy during the Second World War.

Melanie Klein [1882-1960] and child psychoanalysis.

6. **Pictures of toys used in play therapy.**

7. **Children's drawings.**

8. M Klein. **Narrative of a child analysis: the conduct of the psycho-analysis of children as seen in the treatment of a ten-year old boy.** London. The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis. 1975.

Melanie Klein devised methods of studying disturbance in small children by using toys and observing how the child played with them, and by analysing their drawings. These methods are now widely used for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes by those working with disturbed children. Klein's theoretical framework remains a major influence within British psychoanalysis.

Lady Mellanby (née Tweedy) [1882-1978].

May Mellanby was married to Sir Edward Mellanby, physiologist and Secretary of the Medical Research Council. Her assistance was vital in his work on nutrition. She was also known in her own right for her researches into dentition and the nutritional basis of dental decay.

9. **Home Office Certificates granted to May Mellanby in connection with animal experiments.** 1910-1941.

10. **Agene in flour: its role in canine hysteria.** 1948-49.

While her husband was Secretary of the Medical Research Council, May Mellanby's collaboration enabled him to undertake extensive programmes of physiological research which his duties would otherwise have rendered impossible. She was responsible for most of the day-to-day running of the experiments conducted at the National Institute of Medical Research, Mill Hill.

11. **Correspondence relating to survey of Dental Health of School Children.**

Independently of her husband May Mellanby carried out researches into dentition and was also involved with policy-making bodies.

Minnie Louie Johnson Abercrombie [1909-1984].

12. **The anatomy of judgement.** London. Hutchinson. 1960.

A zoologist by training, Mrs Abercrombie became involved in instructing medical students at University College London. Drawing on studies in group psychology and work on visual perception, she developed influential methods of small group teaching. This book sums up her work on the processes of learning and the interpretation of visual evidence. It has been published in several languages and reprinted many times.

13. **File of reviews and correspondence.**

Robina Addis, OBE [1900-1986].

One of the first psychiatric social workers to qualify in Britain, Robina Addis initially went into child guidance, but extended her interests into aftercare facilities for psychiatric casualties of World War II and into the training of social workers.

14. Ministry of Health, Department of Health for Scotland. **Report of the Working Party on Social Workers in the Local Authority Health and Welfare Services.** London. HMSO. 1959. ('The Younghusband Report'.)

Robina Addis was a member of the Working Party which produced this influential report on social work training.

15. **Memorial Volume**, presented to Robina Addis on her 80th birthday, by her friends and colleagues at a party held at the National Institute for Social Work on 18 April 1980.

Case 12

WOMEN AS DOCTORS

Learning and skill once admitted women to the rank of doctor when structures were less formal. With the increasing professionalisation of medicine, women were excluded and they therefore had to engage in a battle for recognition during the nineteenth century. Their arguments cited the particular contributions which women could make to medical care, especially of their own sex and of children. The need for care of purdah women in the British Empire won the support of Queen Victoria for the campaign for women's medical education. Women doctors also pursued paying practice, even after marriage. This was contrary to the conventions of the time but was sometimes excused by family financial need, and by emphasising the particular qualities which a married woman and mother could bring to her practice.

St Hildegard of Bingen [1098-1180].

1. **Physica.** In *Experimentarius medicinae*. Strassburg. J Schott. 1544.
2. **Portrait.** Line engraving by W Marshall (fl.1617-50).

The Abbess St Hildegard of Bingen, the 'sibyl of the Rhine', had access to learning unavailable to laywomen of the period. An unusually gifted woman, she wrote on many subjects including medicine, and corresponded with contemporary rulers; she also had visions. Her work on medicine was naturally heavily reliant on ideas current in the twelfth century, but it was regarded as of sufficient importance to be printed 400 years later.

3. Trotula. *De passionibus mulierum*. [Part of a 14th cent. medical miscellany.] Western Ms. 544.

Trotula was a physician of Salerno in the eleventh century. Salerno was noted for a school of medicine which included women. Trotula wrote works on obstetrics and gynaecology which remained authoritative for several centuries. This illustration in a fourteenth century manuscript is presumably intended to represent Trotula herself.

Male fears of female doctors.

4. 'Lady Surgeons', *British Medical Journal* 2 April 1870.

i gñe p pñ i spñ de caritatis i quz moris
cōpetant.



De libertate mulier. Lib' trotille.
De frigiditate mulier.
e bonitate mulier. c. xi. ann.

Omnis al
tullit lib
i sexu di
aunt ut
cōphior
iā. mascul
minus i a
frigiditate
uobut co
homas p
mori pñ
i frigiditas
masculs fo
qm i agru
tatuq' offu
gremio su
Omnis p
pñ i qñe i
cra mēb' o
cōis fragi
gtudini i
dico angu
mserunda

5. **The Lady Doctor's Husband**, (from the musical absurdity, M.D.). Coloured lithograph by Alfred Conconnen printed by H G Payne and published by J B Cramer & Co. London.

The illustration is accompanied by a verse written by Lawreen & Oxenford, and composed by Odoardo Barri:

What a fool I was ever to marry,
And lead this terrible life,
For such horrible mixtures I carry,
Prescribed by the Doctor "My Wife."

6. **'All that fuss about such a little trouble'**. Colour reproduction of watercolour by Harold Nymark [b.1925]. Denmark. 1977.

One picture in a series 'The little patient', conceived while Nymark was a patient in the State Psychiatric Hospital near Århus, Jutland.

Some reasons for not admitting women to the medical profession: economic competition, fear of domestic neglect, and abject male terror!

7. **Portrait**. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson [1836-1917]. Wood-engraving from the *Graphic*, 26 November 1870.

Elizabeth Garrett took advantage of a loophole in the conditions for the licence of the Society of Apothecaries to obtain a British medical qualification in 1865. The Society immediately closed the loophole. She took her MD in Paris but lived to see women admitted to British medical education and receiving the parliamentary suffrage. She 'aimed at the maintenance of health rather than the cure of diseases' and was particularly concerned for the health of women and children. She married J G S Anderson, and had two children; her daughter was also a doctor.

Hospitals for Women.

8. **Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital**. Booklet.

9. **South London Hospital for Women**. Booklet.

10. **Marie Curie Hospital**. Ephemera.

Founded by Elizabeth Garrett Anderson as the New Hospital for Women and Children its name was changed, following her death, as a memorial to her. Staffed exclusively by women, the Hospital continues in existence today in spite of repeated threats of closure. Other hospitals opened by women doctors for the treatment of women include the South London Hospital, now closed, and the Marie Curie Hospital, initially established to treat uterine cancer by the then new technique of radium therapy.

11. Letters from Dame Mary Scharlieb [1845-1930] to Maude Schäfer about setting up in practice in Madras. 1883-84.

Of the early generations of women to qualify in medicine, a significant proportion became medical missionaries — and indeed they qualified with that in mind. Mary Scharlieb had already won Queen Victoria's support for the cause of women's medical education by describing to her the purdah restrictions of women in India, which prevented them from being attended by male doctors. It is clear from Mrs Scharlieb's letters and memoirs, however, that besides this philanthropic aim, she also needed to develop a paying practice for family reasons.

12. Lady Hardinge Medical College. Operating theatre and outpatient department. Photograph album. 1921.

The college was set up in Delhi specifically to train Indian women as doctors.

13. Employment of Married Women Doctors.

Certain employing authorities imposed a marriage bar on the employment of married women. This was fought, in the case of women doctors, by the Medical Women's Federation and the British Medical Association and arguments were put forward for the professional benefits accruing to a woman doctor from her experience of marriage and motherhood. Local authority posts filled by women doctors were particularly likely to be concerned with mother and child welfare.

Medical Women's Federation.

14. Jane Harriett Walker [1859-1938]. First President of the Medical Women's Federation. Photograph.

15. List of Presidents 1917-1987.

16. Statistics relating to the employment of women doctors as at 1971.

17. Menu of the Trafalgar Centenary Dinner 1980, The Medical Women's Federation. Leaflet. 1987.

Shortly after the admission of women to medical education, the Association of Registered Medical Women was founded in London in 1879, followed by the creation of further provincial associations. A national body, the Medical Women's Federation, was set up in 1917. This body still plays a vital part in representing the interests of medical women.

Case 13

NURSING

Nursing was a duty of women long before it became a profession in its own right. Behind the figure of the heroic surgeon we often see female figures tending his victim. Prior to the introduction of modern chemotherapy, recovery from many common diseases was more dependent on competent nursing care than on medical intervention. The notion of the nurse as trained expert was, however, a radical development.

1. **Patients being received at a thirteenth century infirmary.** Photograph of reproduction in S G Blaxland Stubbs and E W Bligh. *Sixty centuries of health and physick*. London. Sampson Low, 1931, of illustration from Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS lat 8846.

2. **Woman applying compress; another fanning a patient to relieve headache?** Photograph of illustration from Vienna, Oesterreiche Nationalbibliothek codex 93.

3. **An operation.** Engraving. Dutch. c.1700.

It has always been one of the duties of women to tend to the sick. Routine care of the patient was a task for women, as also assistance during operations, holding bowls, and bandaging.

4. **'The Nurse'.** Lithograph by W Hunt, published by R Ackermann, London.

5. **'The Nurse'.** Anon. Wood-engraving. c.1860.

6. **'Sairy Gamp and Betsy Prig prepare their patient for a journey'.** Half-tone reproduction of an illustration by Phiz (Hablot Knight Browne [1815-1882]) for Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, published in S A Tooley, *The history of nursing in the British Empire*, London, S A Bousfield & Co., 1906.

Nursing as a paid employment was often regarded as only fit for the lower classes of women. In popular imagery, if not in fact, they enjoyed a very bad reputation. Charles Dickens's character Sairey Gamp is supposed to epitomise the unreformed nursing profession. The nurses here are ugly, slatternly and disagreeable. These were women supporting themselves, perhaps in widowhood, in one of the few occupations open to them.



THE NURSE .

‘The Nurse’. Case 13.5.

Protestant Nursing Sisters.

7. Minutes of the Board of Management of the Protestant Nursing Sisters, 1841-1842.

8. Protestant Sisters of Charity. Register of occupation in nursing the sick. 1840-44.

By the early to mid-Victorian era efforts were being made to upgrade the quality of nurses, and to provide them with training. In the 1840s Elizabeth Fry [1780-1845], mainly remembered for her work in prison reform, founded a sisterhood to provide nursing for the sick poor in their own homes. The Board of Management consisted of philanthropic ladies, while the nurses themselves were of a lower class. The Register shows the beginning of a new organisation and recording of nursing care.

9. Letter from H Martineau c.1856.

Nursing was long regarded as a bizarre choice of vocation for the privileged woman, as this letter by Harriet Martineau [1802-1876] on the subject of Florence Nightingale [1820-1910] indicates.

10. William Rathbone [1819-1902]. Organization of nursing. An account of the Liverpool Nurses' Training School ... By a member of the committee [ie William Rathbone]. With an introduction by Florence Nightingale. Liverpool. Holden. 1865.

In her famous Notes on nursing Florence Nightingale, though advising those tending the sick in their own homes, was adamant that instinct alone was no guide to efficacious care. In the prefatory notes to this volume, she pointed out that nursing as a vocation was no amateur work but required knowledge and practice as well as personal qualities.

11. 'The English Nurse'. Anon. Watercolour.

12. 'The English Hospital Nurse'. Anon. Watercolour.

These new-style nurses, unlike the old ones, are young, attractive, soignée and agreeable. Nursing has changed from a job, based on age and experience, to a vocation (note the uniforms) based on training. Neither these stereotyped representations nor the earlier ones should necessarily be taken as reflecting the reality of nursing.

13. Nellie Insley. The history of the foundation of English Hospital for French Soldiers, at the old Château at St Malo, September 1914, transferred, March, 1915, to the Grand Hotel des Grèves, St. Malo, now known as the Hôpital Notre Dame des Grèves, St. Malo, (Hôpital Complémentaire No.94, Service de Santé). The story of a great adventure. September, 1915.

14. Rosa Louisa Hunt. **Journal of a Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment member on special service during the Great War. 1915-1916.**

Nursing became to women what becoming a soldier was to men: a way to serve their country in time of war. These accounts were written by women who joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment during the First World War.

15. **District Nursing. Photographs.**

Nursing attendance in the home is now performed by the District Nurse.

The Modern Nurse.

16. **Recruiting literature.**

The literature, while emphasising the non-tangible rewards to be gained from a caring profession, also makes it clear that modern nursing is a technical and highly skilled occupation; and underlines the material advantages.

17. **Royal College of Nursing Leaflets.**

The diversity of jobs to which a nursing qualification can lead is shown by these pamphlets.

Case 14

ANCILLARY PROFESSIONS

While ancillary professions have developed around growing specialisation in medicine and the increasing sophistication of diagnostic techniques, women have always been engaged in tasks regarded as beneath the dignity of doctors. These relate to the provision of materials essential to treatment, conducting certain minor procedures or diagnostic tests, and undertaking non-medical operations to facilitate recovery and rehabilitation.

Cookery.

1. **Hospital Ward.** Photograph of woodcut. *Regimen Sanitatis. De conservanda bona valetudine.* Frankfurt. 1553.

2. **The Royal Northern Central Hospital, Holloway Road.** Photograph album, 1912, p.28 'The Kitchen'.

Nurses have always been involved in the preparation of food and the feeding of patients; the profession of dietician has arisen as an ancillary role, mostly filled by women.

3. **The leech-gatherers.** Coloured aquatint with etching by Robert Havell I after George Walker, published by Robinson & Sons, Leeds, 1st April 1814. Plate 35 from series 'Costumes of Yorkshire' by G Walker, 1813-14.

When phlebotomy was a standard medical practice, it was necessary to ensure a supply of the right kind of leech.

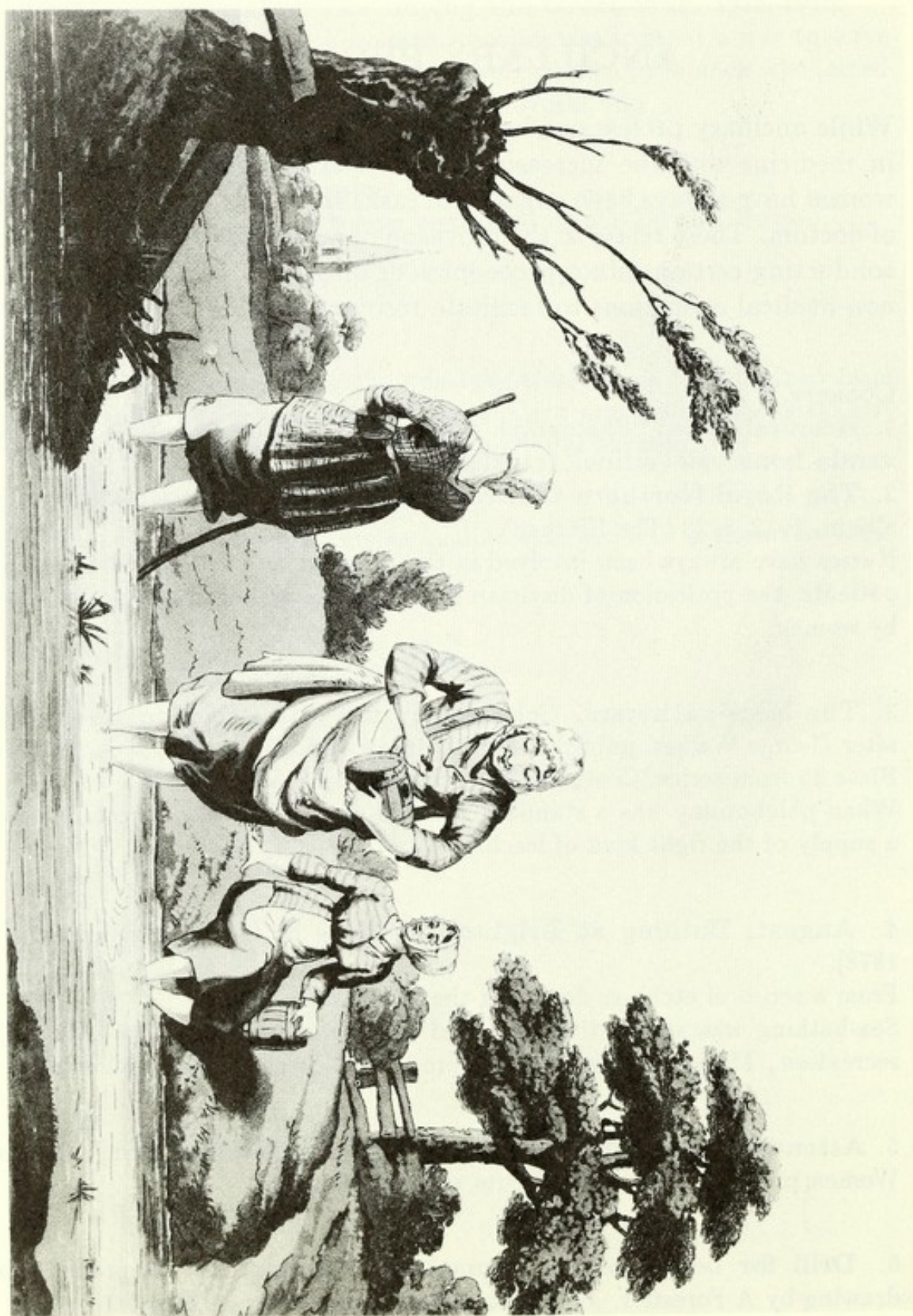
4. **August, Bathing at Brighton.** Etching by George Cruikshank [1792-1878].

From a series of etchings depicting the months.

Sea-bathing was at one time regarded as a therapeutic activity rather than a recreation. These bathing ladies ensure that their clients are well dunked.

5. **Attendants in Münstereifel Spa, [Nordrhein-Westfalen].** Leaflet. Women provide various treatments at a German spa.

6. **Drill for bedridden: a remarkable experiment.** Reproduction of a drawing by A Forestier. *Illustrated London News*, 24 October 1908. Children doing physical exercises in the Alexandra Hospital.



Robert Havell after George Walker. The leech-gatherers. Case 14.3.

7. John A Cholmeley. **History of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.** London. Chapman and Hall. 1985. Physiotherapy Department.

8. **Physiotherapy: the profession today.** Posters and leaflets.
The majority of physiotherapists have always been women.

9. Enid Hester Chataway Moberly Bell. **The story of hospital almoners: the birth of a profession.** London. Faber & Faber. 1961.

The profession of hospital almoner arose from the work of the Charity Organisation Society. Illness was often only one of the problems facing the individuals and families who were the concern of the Society. Dealing with the social consequences of illhealth seemed a task peculiarly fitted for women. With increasing emphasis on the social factors of disease the medical social work professions have expanded.

10. **Artificial Limb Factory.** Laboratorio Volontario Pro Feriti in the Palazzo Centurione, Rome. Photograph by Studio Leonardi, Rome. 1914-18.

While men were at war shooting at one another these women were engaged in making prostheses to replace lost limbs.

11. **The Royal Northern Central Hospital, Holloway Road.** Photograph album, 1912. p.22. Copy-photograph. 'The electrical and X ray department'. As new techniques came to be used in hospitals, at first nurses were expected to assist.

12. **The British Journal of Radiography.** Vol 46. Number 550. October 1973. Special issue to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the British Institute of Radiology.

Radiography is typical of a routine diagnostic procedure which can be carried out by women not wanting to make it a lifelong profession. There has however been considerable anxiety about the long-term effects of exposure to radiation on women's future reproductive life.

13. **Girls working on the preparation of penicillin.** Lithograph by Ethel Gabain [1883-1950]. 1944.

Behind the miracle cures are those engaged in routine tasks such as this. This print was one in a series illustrating women's work in World War II. Ethel Gabain took her lithographic stones to Fleming's laboratory at St Mary's Hospital, London, in order to portray the workers.

14. Anna Katarina Leana Levin. **Cerebral palsy; the pioneer years of occupational therapy in Scotland.** Edinburgh. Livingstone. 1964.

The illustrations in this book show occupational and speech therapists working with children suffering the multiple disabilities of cerebral palsy.

15. **Ante-natal exercise class being taken by woman.** From **Antenatal Illustrated.** Photograph.

Although childbirth itself has become almost exclusively the province of the doctor, ante-natal training is usually conducted by women instructors.

Case 15

WOMAN AS INVALID

The suffering but resigned (and of course beautiful) female invalid is perhaps an over-worked motif. Many women become unwell as a result of their labours in caring for others, and have been (and still are) exhorted to take care of their own health to enable them to carry out their responsibilities to others. Invalid women were often less passive victims than such images and descriptions of them suggest.

1. **The invalid.** Wood engraving by J C Griffiths after a painting by George Goodwin Kilburne [1839-1924].

2. **The common lot.** Coloured lithograph with gouache by J Bouvier, published by William Spooner, London. c.1850.

The illustration is accompanied by verses which speak the prevalence of tuberculosis.

"Mourn not thy daughter fading!
It is the common lot.
That those we love should come and go,
And leave us in this world of woe;
So murmur not!
No pangs, nor passionate grief,
Nor anger raging hot,
No ills shall ever harm her more;
She goes into the silent shore,
Where pain is not."

These pictures depict romantically drooping sick young women. The flowers suggest fast-fading beauty.

3. **The convalescent. A neighbourly visit.** Colour reproduction by the Antikamnia Company, St Louis, Missouri, of an oil painting by Emma Magnus [fl. 1884-1901].

It was used as the cover of their 1907 calendar.

4. **Advertisements. Anadin, Quiet Life Tablets.** 1988.

This 1907 advertisement for painkillers implies the strains that caring places on the carer. Recent advertisements make the same point.



After Ethel Magnus. The convalescent. A neighbourly visit. Case 15.3.

St Hildegard of Bingen [1098–1180].

5. Charles Joseph Singer [1876–1960]. **From magic to science, essays on the scientific twilight.** London. Ernest Benn. 1928.

6. Hildegard von Bingen. **Wissen die Wege. Scivias.** Edited by Maura Böckeler. Salzburg. Otto Müller. 1954.

7. Hildegard von Bingen. **Welt und Mensch: das Buch 'De operatione Dei'.** Edited by Heinrich Schipperges. Salzburg. Otto Müller. 1965.

Reproductions of the illuminations of St Hildegard's visions. It has been suggested that she suffered from migraine (possibly epilepsy), since her illustrations of these visions include phenomena characteristic of the 'aura'.

8. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu [1689–1762]. **Town Eclogue. Saturday. The smallpox. Flavia.** 1715.

Based on Lady Mary's own experience, this poem derides doctors' incapacity in the face of this disease.

Harriet Martineau [1802–1876].

9. **Portrait.** Lithograph by Alfred Croquis (pseudonym for Daniel Maclise) [1806–70].

10. **Life in a sickroom. Essays.** By an invalid. 2 ed. London. E Moxon. 1844.

11. **Letters on mesmerism.** London. E Moxon. 1845.

Harriet Martineau, a life-long sufferer from an assortment of ailments, wrote prolifically on political economy and many other subjects. Her essays on life in a sickroom demonstrated how to lead a useful and even enjoyable life as an invalid. The failure of conventional medicine to relieve her sufferings led her to take an interest in Mesmerism.

Florence Nightingale [1820–1910].

12. **Portrait.** Photograph in old age.

13. **Subsidiary notes as to the introduction of female nursing into military hospitals in peace and war.** London. Harrison and Sons. 1858.

14. **Sanitary statistics of native colonial schools and hospitals.** London. G E Eyre and W Spottiswoode. 1863.

15. **Life or death in India.** A paper read at the meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Norwich, 1873. London. Spottiswoode. 1974.

16. **Observations on the evidence contained in the stational reports submitted to her by the Royal Commission on the sanitary state of the army in India.** London. E Stanford. 1863.

Florence Nightingale took to her sofa shortly after her return from the Crimea. These volumes represent but a small part of her vast output while she led the life of an invalid. She wielded enormous influence over the development of nursing as a profession and in matters of sanitary reform. Besides her many published works, thousands of her letters survive. Sir George Pickering suggests that such were the obligations of a Victorian lady that Nightingale could never have achieved all that she did without the excuse provided by her ill-health.

Melanie Klein [1882-1960].

17. 'Observations after an operation'. Typescript. n.d.

18. Photograph. c.1959

Another case of a woman observing her own reactions to treatment rather than passively undergoing it. Melanie Klein describes her experience of having an operation: probably the gall-bladder operation she underwent in 1937 just prior to the birth of her first grandchild.

Above Cases 10-15

1. **Childbirth. Birth of the Virgin.** Oil on canvas by or after Francesco Bassano [1549-1592].

Even when ostensibly depicting a hagiographic or mythological subject, painters of birth scenes tend to deploy certain preconceptions about the conduct of the event. It takes place in a domestic setting, with the mother and midwife attended and supported by other women, who warm blankets, prepare a bath for the baby, and bring sustenance to the mother.

2. **Baby care. La Savoyarde.** Engraving by Nicolas de Larmessin IV [1684-1753] after Jean Baptiste Marie Pierre [1713-89].

While breast-feeding one child, this woman is surrounded by her healthy older offspring. The assumption is that their health is a result of her maternal devotion.

3. **Domestic medicine. Old woman combing nits from a child's hair.** Lithograph by Ferdinand Piloty [1785-1844] after Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. Parasitic infestation is not only uncomfortable but may lead to disease. This 'grooming behaviour' expresses affection and contributes to health.

4. **Domestic medicine. The wife.** Mixed method engraving by J C Bromley [1795-1839] after Edward Prentis [1797-1854], published by Arthur Graves in 1837.

Underneath the illustration there are verses by Samuel Rogers:

She sits silent by
Watching with her anxious eye
A guardian angel o'er his life presiding
Doubling his pleasures, and his cares dividing.

While it may be pure wifely anxiety which leads to this vigil over a sick husband, the medicine bottle and glasses suggest that she is also his nurse.

5. **Philanthropy and charity. Mademoiselle de Lavallière chez une femme paralytique.** Coloured engraving by Ruotte after Schall, published by Busset, Paris, c.1800.

Taking physical and spiritual sustenance to the sick poor was seen as a very suitable philanthropic activity for the more privileged woman.

6. **Folk medicine. A witch plucking mandrake.** Pencil, pen and ink with coloured washes and white heightening. Anon. After etching after painting by Henry Fuseli, RA [1741-1825].

Women's healing skills often bore the connotation of tampering with forbidden knowledge.

7. Nursing. **La laïcisation des hôpitaux - Ecole des infirmières - Cours de pansement pratique sur le mannequin.** Pencil, charcoal, pen and ink, with ink wash by Joseph Belon [d.1927].

In Roman Catholic countries there was a shift during the nineteenth century from nursing by religious orders of sisters to the development of a lay nursing profession. This was analogous to the development of nursing as a skilled occupation requiring special training which took place in Protestant countries.

8. Nursing. **A conscientious objector to vaccination.** Pencil, charcoal and gouache by Lance Calkin, published in **The Graphic**, 1 February 1902.

The motherly nurse holds the victim steady for the vaccinator, but also consoles her.

9. Nursing. **The Great Military Hospital at Scutari.** Coloured lithograph. Designed and printed by Thomas Packer, published by Stannard & Dixon. London 24 February 1855.

This picture of Florence Nightingale and her nurses tending the wounded of the Crimean War recalls the Christian Acts of Mercy tradition of visiting the sick.

Sources of Exhibits

Abbreviations

WIC	Wellcome Institute Library Iconographic Collection
WMS	Wellcome Institute Library Western Manuscript Collection
WPB	Wellcome Institute Library Early Printed Books
WMM	Wellcome Institute Library Modern Medicine Collection
WBC	Wellcome Institute Library Bibliographical Collection
CMAC	Contemporary Medical Archives Centre, Wellcome Institute
WMSM	Wellcome Museum at the Science Museum
WFA	Wellcome Foundation Archives

Panels

WIC: 1; 2; 3. **WMS:** 4-544. **CMAC:** 5-SA/LIS/R.19.

Case 1

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6. **WMS:** 7-804; 8-804a; 9-632.
WPB: 11-5511; 12-5616; 13-36170/A. **WMSM:** 10-1982-1566. **Lesley Hall:** 14

Case 2

WIC: 1;5. **WMS:** 2-3544; 6-1289. **WPB:** 3-Sharp; 4-38758/B; 7-Nightingale Collection. **CMAC:** 8-GC/80/3; 9-GC/80/l; 10-PP/COO/L13; 11-PP/COO/L16; 12-SA/NBT/G.4. **WMSM:** 15-1982-561/63. **Royal College of Nursing:** 13. **Association of Radical Midwives:** 14.

Case 3

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 7. **WPB:** 4-27404/P; 5-37172/B; 6-36465/B. **WMM:** 14; 15. **CMAC:** 9-PP/PRE/C.4; 10-PP/PRE/C.3; 11-PP/PRE/C.3; 16-SA/NBT/N.7. **WMSM:** 12-A600085; 13-A625819. **WFA:** 8.

Case 4

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 5; 7. **WMS:** 8-3547; 9-2990; 10-1026 **WPB:** 11-27724/A; 12-Wolley; 13-Wolley.

Case 5

WIC: 7. **WPB:** 1-31834/A; 2-31844/A; 3-22369/B; 4-41649/A; 6-Nightingale Collection. **WMSM:** 11-1983-1399. **WFA:** 8. **Lesley Hall:** 5; 9; 10; 12.

Case 6

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 10; 11; 12. **WPB:** 4-Smith; 5-Suppl. Seq; 6-22369/B; 7-16713/B. **CMAC:** 13-PP/ESS/P.32/4; 14-SA/NBT/G.27,N.7. **Periodicals:** 8; 9.

Case 7

WIC: 1; 3; 4; 5; 9. **WPB:** 2-42207/A; 6-5616; 7-Trye; 8-19555/B; 11-27745/A; 12-27265/A; 13-23804/P; 14-20217/B. **Periodicals:** 10.

Case 8

WIC: 1; 2. **WPB:** 3-38664/B. **WBC:** 4-BZP (Seacole); 5-BZP (Eddy). **CMAC:** 10-PP/MCS/B.23. 11-SA/ALR/E.5; 12-SA/ALR/D.16; **WMSM:** 13-1982-561/20. **Wellcome Ephemera Collection:** 8; 9. **Christian Science Committee on Publications:** 6; 7.

Case 9

WIC: 5 **WBC:** 1-Spec. Collection **CMAC:** 6-GC/52; 7-SA/LIS/F.7; 8-GC/89/1; 15-SA/ALR/D.1, D.2, G.18, G.29. **Wellcome Government Publications:** 4. **Madeleine Simms:** 10; 11; 12; 13; 14. **Fawcett Library:** 2; 3. **Caroline Charlton:** 16. **Lesley Hall:** 17. **Battersea Local History Library:** 9.

Case 10

WIC: 1; 4; 13. **WMS:** 5-1978; 6-1979. **WPB:** 2-371832/A; 3-13918/D. **WMM:** 7; 8. **CMAC:** 9-PP/MCS/H.4; 10-PP/MCS/C.45; 11-PP/MCS/B.19; 12-CMAC Ephemera.

Case 11

WIC: 4. **WMM:** 8. **CMAC:** 1-SA/LIS/R.50; 2-SA/LIS/R.60, 61; 3-SA/LIS/H.3; 5-SA/LIS/R.18; 6-PP/KLE/A.47; 7-PP/KLE/B.56; 9-PP/MEL/C.104, 107; 10-PP/MEL/C.1; 11-Uncatalogued papers of Lady Mellanby; 12, 13- Uncatalogued papers of M L J Abercrombie; 14, 15- Uncatalogued papers of R. Addis.

Case 12

WIC: 2; 6; 7; 12. **WMS:** 3-544. **WPB:** 1-2100. **CMAC:** 11-PP/ESS/P.67, 68; 13-SA/BMA/C.253. **Wellcome Ephemera Collection:** 5. **Medical Women's Federation:** 8; 9; 10; 14; 15; 16; 17. **Periodicals:** 4.

Case 13

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 11; 12. **WMS:** 9-Autograph Letters. **WPB:** 10-Nightingale Collection. **CMAC:** 13-GC/22; 14-GC/40. **Queen's Nursing Institute:** 7; 8; 15. **Royal College of Nursing:** 16; 17.

Case 14

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 10; 11; 13. **WMM:** 9; 14. **WBC:** 7-NB.RX.43; 12-DT.AS.41. **CMAC:** 15-PP/GDR/C.144. **Wellcome Ephemera Collection:** 6. **Chartered Society of Physiotherapists:** 8.

Case 15

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 9; 12. **WPB:** 8-37180/B; 10-35660/B; 11-35661/A; 13, 14, 15, 16-Nightingale Collection. **WBC:** 5-AB.AH.; 6-BN.CA; 7-BN.CA. **CMAC:** 17-PP/KLE/C.95; 18-PP/KLE/A.120. **Lesley Hall:** 4.

Over Cases 10-15

WIC: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9.

Suggestions for further reading.

- M Alic. *Hypatia's heritage: a history of women in science*. London. 1985.
- M E Baly. *Nursing and social change*. 2nd Edition. 1980.
- Florence Nightingale and the nursing legacy. London. 1986.
- A history of the Queen's Nursing Institute. London. 1987.
- B Brookes. *Abortion in England 1900-1967*. London. 1988.
- V L and B Bullough. *The care of the sick: the emergence of modern nursing*. London. 1979.
- J Carter and T Duriez. *With child: birth through the ages*. Edinburgh. 1986.
- M Chamberlain. *Old wives' tales: their history, remedies and spells*. London. 1981.
- J Donnison. *Midwives and medical men: a history of inter-professional rivalry and women's rights*. London. 1977.
- B Ehrenreich and D English. *Witches, midwives, and nurses. A history of women healers*. New York. 1973.
- V Fildes. *Breasts, bottles, babies: a history of infant feeding*. Edinburgh. 1985.
- C Hardyment. *Dream babies: child care from Locke to Spock*. London. 1983.
- K C Hurd-Mead. *Women in medicine: from the earliest times to the beginning of the nineteenth century*. Haddam, Conn, USA. 1938.
- E Moberley Bell. *Storming the citadel: the rise of the woman doctor*. London. 1953.
- F Prochaska. *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth century England*. London. 1980.
- A Summers. *Angels and citizens: British women as military nurses, 1854 -1914*. London. 1988.
- J R Walkowitz. *Prostitution and Victorian society: women, class, and state*. Cambridge. 1980.
- R Walton. *Women in social work*. London. 1975.
- E Westacott. *A century of vivisection and anti-vivisection*. Ashington, Rochford, Essex. 1949.



